

Article 36

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

To the extent that funds have been appropriated specifically for tuition reimbursement, unless otherwise provided in such legislative action, the departmental employers agree to establish a system of tuition reimbursement for all departmental employees. However, effective for fiscal year 2002-03 and continuing through fiscal years 2003-04 and 2004-05 the Department of Corrections and the Department of Community Health will establish an account specifically for the purpose of tuition reimbursement, based on a ratio of \$4.00 per year per departmental employee. While there is no guarantee, it is the expectation that the allocation of such funds to Security Unit employees will be in approximate proportion to the percentage of total departmental employment accounted for by the Security Unit.

The departmental employer will notify the union, upon request, of the amount of money appropriated and allocated by the department, as well as any change in such allocations.

The administration of the program shall be consistent with the Civil Service Rules and Regulations, except as specifically provided herein, provided that no such reimbursement shall be authorized where departmental employees are on layoff from an occupation for which such academic pursuit is the primary preparation.

Reimbursement shall apply only to the per-credit-hour cost of tuition, and not to such items as lab fees, miscellaneous fees, books or supplies. Selection among eligible applicants, and proportion of reimbursement, shall be determined by the departmental employer. Employees selected shall only be reimbursed upon presenting written documentation of successful completion of the course.

Tuition reimbursement shall not be made unless the course pertains to the employee's current occupation (such as criminal justice for corrections officers) or one in which the employer plans to seek candidates.

Procedures to be used for application, approval and verification of successful completion shall be established by departments. A department may require the employee to commit himself/herself to continuing employment with the department for a reasonable period after completion of the courses for which tuition reimbursement has been received. (Equivalency of work time for course work shall be considered reasonable).

The provisions of this article shall not apply in those cases where the employer requires the employee to take a course(s) as part of assigned duties.

Departmental employers will submit a request for an appropriation for tuition

reimbursement unless, in the judgment of the Department, directives or guidelines of the Department of Management and Budget, or other budgetary authority, indicate such a request would be contrary to State policy.

In the Department of Corrections, the provisions of Department of Corrections letter to MCO Central Office, dated October 1, 1993 (incorporated herein as Appendix H), shall continue to apply to Security Unit employees, unless the parties agree otherwise in secondary negotiations or through a Letter of Understanding. In the Department of Community Health, the provisions of the 1996 secondary agreement (incorporated herein as Appendix I) shall continue to apply unless the parties agree otherwise in secondary negotiations or a Letter of Understanding.